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May 13, 2008
 Contact: Shawn Robinson
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 937-229-3391

NEWS RELEASE

Editors: Mr. Liu will be available for media interviews at 10 a.m., Wednesday, May 14, on campus in the World Exchange lounge in the ground floor of Alumni Hall. Parking is available in C Lot. Alumni Hall is the four-story brick building at the north end of the lot. Please contact Shawn Robinson if you plan to interview him.

UD STUDENT'S FAMILY SURVIVES CHINESE EARTHQUAKE, WORRIES ABOUT AFTERMATH

DAYTON, Ohio – Liu "Tony" Xue has experienced a few earthquakes in his life. After all, his hometown of Ya'an, a city of 225,000 in China's Sichuan province, is in an area well known for earthquakes.

But Monday's powerful quake left the University of Dayton student's mother, father and grandmother living in their car, with dwindling food supplies, and feeling grateful.

Liu said that according to news reports he's seen, as many as 40,000 people in his hometown are living on the streets; at least 35 are dead and as many as 3,000 homes may have been destroyed. Ya'an is about 80 miles due south of the earthquake's epicenter.

"The earthquake was so, so terrible," said Liu, a University of Dayton electro-optics student who just earned his master's degree, explaining that at least three fault lines surround his city.

He first heard about the quake via an early morning phone call from a friend. Calls to his parents' home went unanswered, and he began trying their cell phones.

"I was so desperate. I kept dialing and dialing and after about 15 tries, I finally got through to my dad," Liu said.

His father had been driving when the earthquake hit. "He said he felt like he had lost control," Liu related.

"My mother is professor in a university and she was trying to start a class. She felt the ground moving and shaking and then led the students outside," he said.

His grandmother, at home in a fifth-floor apartment, felt the rumbling.

"She described it as the walls were dancing. She was horrified while it was happening and then three or four minutes later it stopped," he said.

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Liu says he feels very grateful for many things: his family is safe, Ya'an was far from the worst part of the earthquake damage and his family's car is protecting him from the weather.

"Most people in China don't have a car, so many people are living in the streets. My family told me there aren't enough tents for everyone," he said.

Until engineers can inspect buildings for structural safety, they'll have to stay away from homes and out of buildings, he said. Although food is a concern, he said his mother told him "they still have bread and water."

Liu's is worried about the aftermath of the earthquake and what the people of Ya'an and Sichuan will need. He's working to establish a fund for charitable contributions.

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For more information, contact Shawn Robinson at 937-229-3391 or robinson@udayton.edu.